

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently amended) A method performed by a computer system, the method comprising:

receiving, ~~[[by]]~~ using a network interface or an input device of associated with the computer system, a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query further includes a plurality of user-selected operators associated with one of the search terms of the search query and where the plurality of operators comprise a same operator repeated multiple times;

~~broadening, by a processor of~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer system, the one of the search terms based on the plurality of user-selected operators to produce a broadened search query, where broadening the one of the search terms comprises:

broadening the one of the search terms to an extent determined by a number of times the same operator is repeated; and

~~executing, by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer system, a search using the broadened search query.

38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, where the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with another one of the search terms that indicates that the other one of the search terms should not be broadened.

39. (Currently amended) A method performed by a computer system, the method comprising:  
receiving, ~~[[by]]~~ using a network interface or an input device of associated with the  
computer system, a search query comprising a plurality of search terms;

broadening, ~~by a processor of~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, one of the plurality of search terms;

excluding, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query;

executing, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, a search based on the search query, after excluding the broadened one of the plurality of  
search terms, to provide search results; and

evaluating, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered  
distinctions.

40. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, where broadening the one of the search  
terms comprises:

determining a meaning associated with the one of the search terms.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, where broadening the one of the search  
terms comprises:

determining a related concept based on the meaning.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, where broadening the one of the search terms comprises:

modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the one of the search terms.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, where broadening the one of the search terms comprises:

selecting a broadening search term associated with the one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

44. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, where broadening the one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

receiving, from the user, a selection from the presented at least broadened search term.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, where broadening the one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

46-48. (Canceled)

49. (Currently amended) ~~A computer-readable medium~~ One or more memory devices containing instructions executable by ~~at least one processor~~ one or more processors, the ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices comprising:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]]~~ to receiving receive a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query includes multiple symbols which define a user-assigned strength of broadening associated with one of the search terms of the search query;

one or more instructions ~~[[for]]~~ to broadening broaden the one of the search terms to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength to produce a broadened search query, where a number of the multiple symbols determines the extent to which the one of the search terms is broadened; and

one or more instructions ~~[[for]]~~ to executing execute a search based on the broadened search query.

50. (Canceled)

51. (Currently amended) ~~The computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with another one of the search terms that indicates that the other one of the search terms should not be broadened.

52. ((Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where the one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to broadening~~ broaden the one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to determining~~ determine a meaning associated with the one of the search terms.

53. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 52, where the one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to broadening~~ broaden the one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to determining~~ determine a related concept based on the meaning.

54. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where the one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to broadening~~ broaden the one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating~~ modify, replace, supplement, remove, or restate the one of the search terms.

55. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where the one or more instructions ~~[[for]] broadening~~ broaden the one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to selecting~~ select a broadening search term associated with the one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

56. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where the one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to broadening~~ broaden the one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to presenting~~ present at least one broadened search term associated with the one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to receiving~~ receive, from the user, a selection from the presented at least broadened search term.

57. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where the one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to broadening~~ broaden the one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to presenting~~ present at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

one or more instructions ~~[[for]] to forming~~ form the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

58-62. (Canceled)

63. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 49, where each of the multiple symbols comprises one of a graphical or character symbol.

64. (Currently amended) The ~~computer-readable medium~~ one or more memory devices of claim 51, where the user-selected delimiter comprises a symbol that is different than the multiple symbols.

65. (Currently amended) A system ~~implemented within a computer device~~, comprising:  
one or more server devices comprising:

means for receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query further includes multiple user-selected operators associated with one of the search terms of the search query and where the multiple user-selected operators comprise multiple symbols that represent search term broadening;

means for broadening the one of the search terms based on the multiple user-selected operators to produce a broadened search query, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms based on the multiple user-selected operators to produce a broadened search query comprises:

means for broadening the one of the search terms to an extent determined by a number of occurrences of the multiple symbols; and

means for executing a search using the broadened search query.

66. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the multiple symbols comprise one of a graphical or character symbol.

67. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with another of the search terms that indicates that the other of the search terms should not be broadened.

68. (Previously presented) The system of claim 67, where the user-selected delimiter comprises a symbol that is different than the multiple symbols.

69. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for determining a meaning associated with the one of the search terms.

70. (Previously presented) The system of claim 69, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for determining a related concept based on the meaning.

71. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the one of the search terms.

72. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:



means for selecting a broadening search term associated with the one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

73. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

means for receiving a selection from the presented at least broadened search term from the user.

74. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

means for forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

75-76. (Canceled)

77. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39, where broadening the one of the plurality of search terms comprises:

determining a meaning associated with the one of the plurality of search terms and  
determining a related concept based on the meaning.

78. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39, where broadening the one of the plurality  
of search terms comprises:

modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the one of the plurality of  
search terms.

79. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39, where broadening the one of the plurality  
of search terms comprises:

selecting a broadening search term associated with the one of the plurality of search terms  
from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic  
meaning.

80. (Currently amended) A method performed by a computer system, the method comprising:

receiving, ~~[[by]]~~ using a network interface ~~or an input device of~~ associated with the  
computer system, a search query comprising a search term;

obtaining, ~~by a processor of~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, a set of broadened search terms based on the search term;

presenting, ~~by the~~ using a network interface ~~or by an output device of~~ associated with the  
computer system, the set of broadened search terms as a set of corresponding hyperlinks in a user  
interface;

receiving, ~~by the~~ using a network interface or the input device associated with the  
computer system, selection of a subset of hyperlinks of the set of hyperlinks to select a subset of  
the broadened search terms;

broadening, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, the search query using the selected subset of broadened search terms; and

executing, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer  
system, a search using the broadened search query.

81. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, where obtaining the set of broadened  
search terms comprises:

determining at least one meaning associated with the search term.

82. (Previously presented) The method of claim 81, where obtaining the set of broadened  
search terms comprises:

determining one or more related concepts based on the at least one meaning.

83. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, where obtaining the set of broadened  
search terms comprises:

modifying, supplementing, or restating the search term.

84. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, where obtaining the set of broadened  
search terms comprises:

selecting a broadened search term of the set of broadened search terms that is associated with the search term from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

85. (Currently amended) A method performed by a computer system, the method comprising:

receiving, ~~[[by]]~~ using a network interface or an input device of associated with the computer system, a search query comprising a search term;

obtaining, ~~by a processor of~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer system, a set of broadened search terms based on the search term;

presenting, ~~by the~~ using a network interface or an output device of associated with the computer system, a set of checkboxes in conjunction with the set of broadened search terms, where each checkbox of the set of checkboxes corresponds to one broadened search term of the set of broadened search terms;

receiving, ~~by the~~ using a network interface or an output device of associated with the computer system, a selection of a subset of the set of checkboxes to select a subset of the broadened search terms;

broadening, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer system, the search query using the selected subset of broadened search terms; and

executing, ~~by the processor~~ using one or more processors associated with the computer system, a search using the broadened search query.

86. (Previously presented) The method of claim 85, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

determining at least one meaning associated with the search term.

87. (Previously presented) The method of claim 86, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

determining one or more related concepts based on the at least one meaning.

88. (Previously presented) The method of claim 85, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

modifying, supplementing, or restating the search term.

89. (Previously presented) The method of claim 85, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

selecting a broadened search term of the set of broadened search terms that is associated with the search term from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.